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Let's Hear Directly From the CIA

Central Intelligence Agency has had many critics and few defenders of the way it handled the ill-fated Cuban invasion.

But it was more than a CIA failure in the opinion of Joseph Newman, for several years New York Herald Tribune roving reporter in Latin America, who sees the invasion in a new light.

He says "President Kennedy's top foreign policy advisers, anxious to protect the United States from world-wide condemnation, watered down the battle plan for the invasion of Cuba to the point where it was virtually doomed for failure at the outset."

But it is not the military-intelligence side alone to be blamed, because foreign policy advisers also had a prominent role in fouling up the plan.

"These two groups entered into a compromise between military needs and international political considerations," says Newman. "The compromise resulted in failure. President Kennedy, in the last analysis, acceded to the compromise and he authorized the operation in its

crippled form to proceed against heavy odds.

"The plan to invade Cuba with a relatively insignificant force of 1,400 Cuban exiles was based on two broad assumptions: (1) control of the air to secure a beachhead and (2) snowballing support from the Cuban people, once the invading force could demonstrate that its foothold was secure and that it was on the march."

These two requisites were impaired by restrictions insisted upon by three of the President's foreign policy advisers, Secretary of State Rusk, Under Secretary Bowles and U.N. Ambassador Stevenson, and other key advisers went along with them.

Ahead of the sad denouement, which we continue to mull with regret and embarrassment, neither of the requisites of air cover and rallying dissidents took place. Holding CIA completely responsible for the debacle obviously is unfair. To give the country a clearer estimate of CIA's role and shortcomings, Congress should provide the intelligence agency an opportunity to present its side in an open hearing.